

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

IN RELATION TO

A FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

**FOR THE ERECTION OF TWO AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS
TO COVER EXISTING CATTLE HANDLING AND GATHERING
AREAS**

AT:

PARK FARM, SWINDON, WILTSHIRE, SN5 0AQ

APPLICANT: C D & S M RAWLINGS

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JULY 2026

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to identify and report upon planning considerations in terms of the design and access in respect of the above application.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is a full planning application to extend two existing agricultural sheds by roofing over existing cattle handling and gathering areas within the existing farmyard.

This document should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Block Plan
- Location Plan
- Elevation Drawings and Floorplans – Proposed
- Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer Approval Report
- Countryside Stewardship Agreement Document

BACKGROUND

C D & S M Rawlings is an established family run dairy farming enterprise based at Park Farm. The business currently farms approximately 281 acres (114 hectares) of land, on the outskirts of Swindon, Wiltshire.

The roofing extension will support the growing farming enterprise which currently houses approximately 100 dairy cattle. The land is mostly down to pasture, with some arable cropping.

The farming business now wishes to make improvements to the buildings at Park Farm, by roofing over two existing areas of concrete yard, which are currently used as livestock gathering areas. The proposed buildings will be essential to the farming business as they will form part of the main collecting yard and open feed and loafing yards. The roofing has been designed to meet the operational needs of the farm, with appropriate dimensions, such as height and width allowing longevity to an established family farming business. The development is considered reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture, as outlined throughout this report.

C D & S M Rawlings have received an agreement offer (agreement number 2192902) under the Mid-Tier Countryside Stewardship Capital Grant Scheme, operated by the Rural Payments Agency, for the roofing works. The proposal is to provide new roofing to two existing cattle gathering areas (Option RP28: Roofing livestock gathering area) at Park Farm. The funding aims to reduce foul drainages, run-off and risk of water pollution and the proposed works will achieve the aims of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

The agreement and planned works are supported by Aoife Storer-Martin, the Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer for the Severn River Basin. Aoife confirmed that the land is within a medium-water priority area with the pollutant pressures being phosphate, sediment and surface water nitrates.

By providing new roofing, less rainfall will be able to reach the livestock handling area, eliminating the production of slurry. This will then reduce the pressure on the slurry storage, resulting in a more concentrated nutrient content and therefore reduce any subsequent leaching of dirty water into surrounding waterbodies. Furthermore, by improving the separation of clean and dirty water, air quality will be improved.

USE

The site for the building is currently in use as a cattle handling and gathering area. This is not set to change under the proposal as the proposed building is merely a cover for the existing yard to prevent run-off and reduce water pollution. The proposal will be directly used in conjunction with the farming business and will be for the purpose of agriculture, as demonstrated throughout this report.

DESIGN

It is proposed that Building A will measure 278.6m² being the existing gap between the straw barn and milking parlour. The mono-pitch roof will have a height of 4m at the lower eaves, rising to 5.5m where it connects to the agricultural building. Overall, the proposed building will be no taller than the adjacent agricultural buildings, as shown on the site plan and elevational drawings.

It is proposed that Building B will measure 109.8m², being the existing gap to the rear of the cattle building. The roof will have a height of 4m at the lower eaves, rising to 5m where it connects to the cattle building. Overall, the building will be no taller than the adjacent cattle building, as shown on the site plan and elevational drawings.

The proposed buildings will be constructed using grey steel stanchions, with both buildings being open sided. Building A will have grey concrete panels and Yorkshire timber boarding to the front and rear. The existing good quality concrete yard and surrounding barns will remain the same and in situ. Due to the layout of the farmyard, Building B will not be visible from the northern elevation.

The materials chosen are typical of agricultural buildings, and the choice of grey fibre cement roof panels will allow the buildings to fit in with the existing farmyard complex and minimise impact on the surrounding landscape.

LAYOUT & LOCATION

The proposed works are located within the existing farmyard, with the roofing being of similar construction and height to the adjacent agricultural buildings. They will be situated directly on the existing concrete yard at Park Farm, resulting in minimal landscape disturbance to the surrounding area.

Park Farm is located on the outskirts of Swindon, being approximately 5 miles northwest of Royal Wootton Bassett and 9 miles southeast of Malmesbury.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

As identified in the Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer's Report, the proposal will enhance biodiversity and the environment through improving the existing farmyard. No hedges, trees or biodiversity features will be impacted from the proposal as the site is within an active farmyard and includes roofing over existing areas of concrete or hardcore. Therefore, the proposal does not require a Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation, as the site falls under the de-minimis exemption and the development will impact less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat.

SCALE

The scale of the proposal, the access and siting are considered appropriate as the new buildings are designed to cover existing areas of concrete yard and will adjoin existing agricultural barns of similar structure and dimensions. The proposal will make use of an existing access point and is entirely contained within the established farmyard.

ACCESS & TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS

Access to the farmyard will remain unchanged and the proposal will not bring an increase in traffic movements to the site, being merely roofing over existing areas of yard.

Paragraph 88(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports *the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings* and Paragraph 88(b) supports the *development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses*. The proposal allows both of the above to happen, through well-designed new agricultural buildings. It allows an existing farm business to develop, with quality weather-proof storage.

Likewise, Wiltshire Core Strategy Adopted January 2015 supports the proposal. Core Policy 34 identifies *agriculture and land-based industries* as a target sector to be promoted towards a higher-value economy and states it will *support the rural way of life through the promotion of modern agricultural practices*. It states proposals will be supported which *support sustainable farming and food production through allowing development required to adapt to modern agricultural practices and diversification*. The proposal supports an existing farm business by providing more practical agricultural buildings, in keeping with the requirements of modern agriculture.

Core Policy 48 supports rural life through key objectives which include *protecting the countryside and maintaining its local distinctiveness*. The proposal allows this to happen through providing well thought-out agricultural building designs which have been planned to minimise impacts on the surrounding landscape.

CONCLUSION

The application is considered compliant with local and national planning policies for proposals of this nature, ensuring the long-term growth and stability of an existing agricultural business. This will ensure a prosperous rural economy and agricultural development through well-located new sections of roofing.

Without the proposed roofing works, particularly during the winter months, the site will become wet as they are high traffic areas used by daily farm machinery and livestock. Therefore, the proposed works are reasonably necessary for the purpose of agriculture, especially to contribute to reducing water pollution at ground and surface water level for both the farm and the catchment area. Further details are provided within the Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer report accompanying this application.